

THE 7069
RE-EXHIBITION
OF THE
TESTIMONY
VINDICATED.

I N

Opposition to the unfair ACCOUNT given
of it, by the Rev. Mr. ADAM GIB.

By J O H N B R O W N,

Minister of the Gospel at HADDINGTON.



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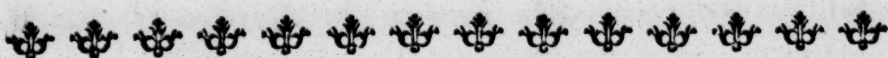


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L E T T E R, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE no intention to meddle with that part of your ACCOUNT, which respects the too much agitated controversy of the Burgeſſs-oath; or, to the work of the Committee, which was appointed to review and publiſh the firſt and ſecond Teſtimonies, with the Preface and Appendix. If they had thought it worth their while, they could have answered for themſelves. If they have publiſhed ſome other papers along with the above-mentioned, or have ſubjoined marginal Notes, Concluſions, or the like, they have but copied after the common editions of the ſecond Teſtimony, in which you inform us, the acceſſions of Meſſrs. Ralph Erſkine and Thomas Mair, have been ſo often printed without any authority from either Preſbytery or Synod: they have but copied your *own* example, in your adding Introductions, Appendixes, marginal Notes, if not alſo Interpolations, and acts for faſting, to not a few publiſhed acts of your ſynod.—They had no reaſon for omitting that excellent *act concerning the doctrine of grace*, that I know of, but that it is eaſy otherwiſe to be had.—As for the Answers to Mr. Nairn, and Declarations now ſubjoined, they contain not a little excellent matter; but, perhaps, need to be corrected, before any re-

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publication.—If the printer of the Re-exhibition hath, in some passages, used *inverted commas* for *Italics*, he hath but copied the pattern given him in; for ought I know, every former edition of the Testimony, on the history of the *Oath of Allegiance*, notwithstanding it was quarrelled above forty years ago, by Mr. Currie and others.—I believe few readers understand as exactly the difference between these two forms of notation as you do.

To inveigh against *correcting* the Testimony, wherever it was necessary, is plainly unreasonable.—You cannot but know, what dishonour to God, and hurt to the souls of men, have originated from the church of England, and the Lutheran churches obstinate refusal to correct the original constitutions of their reformers, even while they made no scruple to recede from that which was right.—Mean-while, it is much to the honour of the once famous Protestant church of France, that her rulers, in her general synods, from time to time, made such improvements on their book of discipline, and even on their excellent Confession of Faith. It is to the immortal honour of the Dutch church, that in her famous Synod of Dort, the remonstrant Arminians were required to exhibit their objections against her long established orthodox Confession, and in consequence hereof, that Synod corrected said Confession, in about an hundred and fifty instances, without altering, as far as I can perceive, so much as one single point of doctrine.

When quickly after the first publication of the second Testimony, a multitude of objections against it were offered by the old dissenters and others in writ; and by Messrs. Currie, Williamson, and others,

in print, it had been very honourable for the Associate Presbytery to have seriously reconsidered it, and made every expression as safe and cautious as possible. They had then advantages for such correction, as now no more exist. Honest and ready amendment, even of circumstantial mistakes, is no inconsiderable step towards perfection.—But the seasonableness of introducing this correcting work immediately after the unhappy breach, I cannot affirm. I never saw, how the vindication of the religious clause of some burghs-oaths, and especially how the maintaining, *That the condemnation of the present swearing of it by Seceders, should not be made a term of ministerial or Christian communion, till that matter could be got more deliberately considered*, which was the true hinge upon which the rupture did turn,—required an alteration of one syllable in the Testimony.—But some expressions of it having been improved by you or others, as if almost infallible arguments in your favours, some of our friends were too inadvertantly decoyed to suspect or quarrel with them. This having hurt the reputation of the Testimony, and made several undervalue and neglect it too much, while you, or others, too highly extolled it, as if it had been almost comparable to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms,—a review of it became proper, though in circumstances not the most advantageous.

The CORRECTIONS which have been made, are wholly of the *circumstantial* kind. Not one of them, that I know of, represents any thing as *good*, which was formerly represented as *sinful*; or as *sinful* which was formerly represented as *good*. Next to none of them represent any thing as *false*, which had been formerly represented as *true*; but merely soften,

abate, or restrict the affirmation. Every *mercy* that was formerly pointed out, as a *standing ground of thanksgiving to God*, is still exhibited as such. Every *sin* that was formerly pointed out as a *ground of the Lord's controversy to be seriously lamented*, is still represented as such, except the parliament's appointing of the oaths of *allegiance* and *abjuration* to be sworn in the room of our covenants, which is (not contradicted, but) merely dropped for want of *evidence*. No correction doth in the least touch any of the grounds of Secession laid down in the first Testimony; and hence can neither alter the state of the Secession, nor any thing material in the proper exercise of Seceders. —Some circumstantial, to which alone the corrections refer, do not in the least alter the *moral nature* of transactions; while others only a little abate the goodness or sinfulness of them.

Your confident assertion, That the *historical* part of the second Testimony is the *most important* part of it; and that none of the representations of facts in it were *ever contradicted*, rather shocks me, than deserves a reply. Astonishing! are human, and so fallible, narratives of more importance than the fundamental truths of divine revelation? Is it possible for you to be ignorant, that a multitude of its narrations were contradicted by Mr. Currie, &c.—If to support your alledged *principal importance* of the historical part, you pretend that the backslidings from attained reformation are there laid down as *grounds of the Secession*, that Secession must not have been stated, as the first Testimony adhered to in the second declares, *From the prevailing party in the established judicatures*, but from the Episcopal church before, as well as from the Presbyterian, at, and ever since.

the Revolution. Nay, also from the state, contrary to the declaration against Mr. Nairn, solemnly adopted in the ordination vows of most of your brethren.

No doubt human histories must now inform us of the mercies bestowed upon our progenitors, and of their fearful backslidings from God; and a human faith in them is necessary to our performance of our duty respecting both. But even where the saints had inspired history to direct them, no more than the *most remarkable mercies* are acknowledged, and the *most remarkable provocations* in their *most notorious circumstances*, are confessed, Neh. ix. Dan. ix.—The facts relating to both, may be very evident in the general, while some aggravating, or alleviating circumstances may be very uncertain. Neither the second Testimony, nor any human history can pretend to give a full or thoroughly circumstantiated account of the favours of God to former generations, or of their sins against him.

It is certainly sinful to plead, that to be innocent, either in ourselves, or in our fathers, which God condemns. But it is no less sinful to lament before God, and especially, in the name of Christ to call others, who have less opportunity to inform themselves,—to confess and bewail before him, *as sinful*, the deeds of our fathers, any further than we have the clearest evidence of these facts, and of their sinfulness.—To murder the character of our neighbours of the past or the present age, under pretence of worshipping God, by *confessing* or *testifying against their iniquities*, any further than we have clear evidence of the facts, and their sinfulness, as well as a providential call to such work, is perhaps no less

criminal, than the random or malevolent offering of human sacrifices to him. To pretend to honour God, with that which, for ought we certainly know, may be a reproaching of others, is more criminal than to offer him robbery for a burnt-offering, Prov. xxii. 1. Isa. lxi. 8.—It had, perhaps, tended much more to the honour of God, and the good of his church, if both Seceders, and their opponents, had talked less of their fathers and neighbours sinfulness, and more earnestly searched out, lamented, and turned from their own; and that their *verbal enveighing* against real backslidings, had not been too much placed in the room of a *truly Christian grief for the dishonour done to God*, by them. No doubt several things at the Revolution, and even between 1638 and 1650, deserve to be lamented. But had we been in their circumstances, it is probable we had done no better, if not much worse.

Your out-cries, that the alterations made in the Testimony are not all distinctly pointed out; and that it is still represented as an act of the Associate Presbytery, come with a very bad grace from your hand. These alterations being in circumstantial, and perhaps not more numerous than those made by yourself, in a late edition of the Testimony, we really did not think them worthy to be particularly pointed out, any more than you did your corrections. Your pointing, or forming of paragraphs, parts, and sections, &c. might as really vitiate a judicial deed, as the alteration of some words.—These corrections being generally intended not, as you groundlessly alledge, to contradict that which formerly stood in the Testimony, but to render the clauses more certain, or less liable to be misunderstood; and being formed by such as

reckon themselves just possessors of the whole power of that court, which framed and emitted the Testimony;—and to the lasting honour of which it redounds, that, in their circumstances, they composed so large and faithful a deed, chargeable with so few and so unimportant infirmities, we did not think, that any other court deserved the name of it. Meanwhile the Preface sufficiently intimates to every reader, that it is altered in some things.

Dear Sir, When perhaps times without number, you made alterations in the minutes of your Presbytery, or Synod, did you ever pretend that this made them no longer deeds of the court, but your deeds, dated from your closet? Or, do they not still stand in print, or writ, as deeds of the court?—If, at your birth, the midwife had cut a tack of your tongue, or any thing else;—if the barber should shave off your hair, or even a dozen of warts or pimples;—if the surgeon should draw some of your corrupted teeth, and put in fresh ones, or cut off your leg when putrified, and give you a new wooden one, would that make you cease to be a creature of God, and become the creature of the midwife, barber, or surgeon? You will not pretend it. Even so, the second Testimony may be still ascribed to the Associate Presbytery, notwithstanding a few duly advertised corrections made upon it.—The *gross and abusive fraud* of which, pretended by you, I shall now briefly consider,

I. You *cavil* that we say, The first book of discipline was approved “by many of the privy counsellors 1561,” instead of—“by the privy council 1560.” But, dear Sir, if it was approved *by the*

privy council, as you affirm, it was certainly approved by many of the *privy counsellors*, as we affirm. But, though you could prove that it had been subscribed by every *privy counsellor*, that will not infer, that it was approved by the *privy council*, in their judicative capacity. Let us impartially state the evidence for and against you. The subscribed approbation of it in Dunlop's Collection of Confessions, is entitled, *Act of Secret Council*. But, whether any other than a presumptuous printer authorised this title, is uncertain: and of the names found in that subscription, seven are added from Knox and Calderwood.—A poor evidence of the authenticity of this act. Petrie in his *church history*, Part II. p. 218. represents this book of discipline, as allowed by the council in January following May 1560. Brown in *Apologetical Relation*, p. 10. says, "That it was presented to the Council, May 20th, (*i. e.* about four months before it was framed.) Whereupon there is an act of Council, subscribed by twenty-six noblemen, and among them by Mr. Gordon, bishop of Galloway, and by the dean of Murray." Logan, the furious advocate for patronage, in his *Modest and Humble Enquiry*, p. 9, 10. says, "That having finished their work, the 20th of May, 1560. (*i. e.* about four months before they began it), they presented it to the Council for their approbation; but did not obtain it till the 17th of January following.—*N. B.* These three, the first two of whom, wrote about an hundred, and the last above an hundred and seventy years after the event, represent it as drawn up before the old Confession of Faith.

On the other hand, Knox, who was a principal compiler of it, says, *History*, p. *mibi*, 275, 276.

“ The parliament dissolved, (*viz.* in the end of August 1560.: consulting was had, how the church might be established in a good and godly policy; and charge was given to—draw in a volume the policy and discipline of the church, as well as they *had done the doctrine* (in the Confession of Faith,) which they did, and presented to the nobility, who did peruse it many days. SOME approved it, and willed the same to have been set forth by a law. OTHERS, perceiving their carnal liberty and worldly commodity somewhat to be impaired thereby, grudged; in so much that the *name* of the book of discipline became odious to them.—Yet the same was subscribed by a great part of the nobility. (He mentions one duke, fourteen earls and lords, four barons, and Gordon and Gray clergymen:) and a great number more in the town-buith of Edinburgh, the 17th of January 1560.”

Calderwood, who lived not long after, says, Hist. p. 24. “ After the dissolving of the parliament (which had ratified the Confession of Faith, and had made acts against Popery, in August 1560.) commission was given to Mr. John Knox, &c.—to set down the heads of discipline, as well as they *had done of doctrine*. They obeyed; and presented it to the nobility. Some approved it, and wished to have it ratified by law. Others—grudged; and the name of the book of discipline became odious to them.—Yet a *number of the nobility* subscribed it in the month of January following.” Page 30. “ At the Convention in January, the book of discipline was subscribed by a great part of the nobility, (fifteen lords, four barons, two clergymen,) and sundry others. In December, the professors that ruled the court, (after the return of Mary their popish queen) began to draw them-

selves apart from their (Protestant) brethren, and also to draw some other lords; and yet raged that any thing should be consulted upon, without their advice.—The ministers (represented) the book of discipline (as) subscribed by the most part with their own hands. Some began to deny that *ever they knew* of such a thing as the book of discipline.”

Spotswood, who had the fullest access to certain information by the acts of council, and his own father's immediate testimony, says, History, p. 152. “ In the Convention kept at Edinburgh in January, —a form of church policy was presented, and desired to be ratified.” Page 174, 175. “ The estates not thinking it meet to enter at that time on examination of the policy.—After the convention dissolved,—*divers noblemen and barons*, moved by John Knox, did convene, and set their hands to the same. (He mentions fourteen nobles, two clergymen, four lairds) and *divers burgeses*.”

Collier, in his history, vol. II. p. 470, 471. says, “ The church discipline was laid before the nobility, who took several days to peruse it. Some were willing to pass it into a law, but the majority dissented.—After the recess of the convention, several noblemen and barons met, at the instance of John Knox, and signed the discipline.”

Shiels, in *Hind let loose*, p. 37. says, “ The book of discipline—was subscribed by *a great part* of the nobility.”—*N. B.* He doth not say the *greater part*.

Crookshanks, in his history, p. 7. says, “ A convention of estates met in January 1561. at which the book of discipline was subscribed by *many* of the nobility and gentry.”

Stevenson, in his history, p. 109. says, “ They

presented it to the privy council, some of whom approved it, and wished to have the same ratified by law; but others—were no way satisfied: therefore *no judicial* ratification of the book could be obtained.”

Dear Sir, is it common sense to say, the book of discipline was compiled before the Confession of faith, as these in the preceding paragraphs, who represent it as approved by the privy council do. Or, after all the evidence I have given to the contrary, Is it consistent with common candor to contend, that the approbation of this book of discipline, by the privy council, is *no way uncertain*?—We changed “1560,” into “1561,” to make it agree with the present reckoning of years, and with other dates in the Testimony; and through want of zeal for commemorating the popish form of the year, which had been instituted for the honour of the Antichristian festivals of *Lady Mary’s conception* on the 25th of March, and of *Christmas*, nine months after.—What hurt can this do to a Protestant testimony?

II. You charge us with *gross fraud* for suggesting, p. 89. That the reformation attained in our church, in opposition to patronages, was not ratified by the parl. 1592, in act 114, or 116.—And, like the furious advocates for patronage, about fifty years ago, you pretend, that the second book of discipline doth but *CRAVE* that the parliament would abolish patronages. But, dear Sir, you cannot but know, that our first book of discipline affirms, chap. iv. 2. “It appertains to the people, and to every several congregation, to elect their minister.” In the said book of discipline, agreed to by the Assembly 1578, ap-

proven and inserted into the Register 1581, appointed to be subscribed by all the ministers of the church of Scotland in 1590.; it is declared, chap. iii. 5. that "none should be intruded into any offices in the kirk, contrary to the will of the congregation, to whom they are appointed." And chap. xii. 9, 10. "The liberty which the church enjoyed before she was corrupted by Antichrist (imported,) that none should be intruded upon any congregation, either by the Prince or any inferior person, without lawful election, and the assent of the people over whom (he) is placed, as the practice of the apostolical kirk and good order craves. — This order which *God's word craves*, cannot stand with patronages and presentations to benefices used in the Pope's kirk. — The names of patronages and benefices, together with the effect thereof, have flowed from the Pope, and corruption of the canon law only, — in so far as thereby any person was intruded or placed over kirks, having the charge of souls; and for asmuchas that manner of providing *hath no ground in the word of God*, but *is contrary to the same*, and to the said liberty of election, *they ought not now* to have place in this light of Reformation; and therefore, whosoever will embrace God's word, and desire the kingdom of Christ Jesus to be advanced, they will also embrace and receive that policy and order, which the word of God and upright state of the church crave; otherwise, it is in vain, that they have professed the same." Can even the keenest advocate for patronage, with candor, pretend, that such declarations amount to no more but a *mere craving*, that the parliament would abolish patronages? No: they imply a most thorough knowledge, faith, profession, and

solemn exhibition of the most plain and faithful testimony, that was ever given, by the church of Scotland, for the *divine right* of adult Christians to elect their own pastors; and against patronage, as an antisciptural, popish, and church-corrupting abomination. If this was any *piece of reformation attained to*, in the church of Scotland, as you must grant it was, if you be a Seceder;—please inform us, if you can, how this testimony against patronage could be ratified in an act of parliament which expressly establisheth patronages, and requires the presbytery to ordain or admit such qualified candidates as *the patrons* should *present*. Or, prove that no reformation can be said to be *attained* in the church, unless where it is ratified by the state.

III. You complain, that, in p. 90, we have stated the censure of the Bishops in 1638, from the acts of assembly, rather than from the mere titles of some of them. But, Sir, (1.) Titles of acts of Assembly, or even of parliament, have, at least, often, no real authority, being merely the work of the clerk; and are sometimes very inaccurate and inadequate to the acts: (see act iv. 6 parl. 1640.) Whereas the acts themselves have the authority of the court, as well as more fully represent what is transacted. (2.) If, as you pretend, the DEPOSING of the Bishops in 1638, plainly meant only a *deposing of them from their episcopal function*, their deposition could have been no proper censure at all, as that episcopal function is no real office warranted by Christ. (3.) If, as you pretend, the deposition of the bishops be of *no importance* or *propriety* in that part of the Testimony, how is their excommunication, there mentioned, of *any import*,

ance or propriety, in it?—Or, Is the just censure of notorious ring-leaders, in fearful apostacy, of no importance or propriety in the Testimony? (4.) If, as you allege, bishops sit and vote in parliament, properly considered AS BARONS, their sitting and voting there may be very regular; and we Seceders, and many others, have foolishly imagined that they sat and voted there, as spiritual lords, representing the church; and the common distinction of lords spiritual and temporal must be quite absurd. (5.) If, as you pretend, the Testimony so very properly left the deprivation of the bishops from their commission to vote in parliament, to be included in their deposition from their episcopal function,—how came that very wise assembly 1638, very properly, to mention it as a distinct thing in all their five acts relative to the censure of the bishops? Besides, you cannot but know, that in that period, not a few others besides the bishops, might have sat and voted in parliament, as commissioners from the kirk. (6.) These deposed bishops sat and voted in parliament, not merely as admitted by the parliament, but properly and formally as commissioned by, and in name of the kirk. Hence, to depose them from the privilege of sitting and voting in parliament, in name of the kirk, means neither more nor less, than depriving them of all commission or power to act in parliament, in name of, or as commissioners from the church.

IV. You pretend that we have grossly and fraudulently calumniated our covenanting ancestors, in acknowledging, p. 90, 91. *That the enforcing of religious duties with civil penalties, and in too many instances blending the affairs of church and state with one an-*

other, is totally inconsistent with the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom;—and boldly challenge us to give so much as one instance, in all the public managements from 1638 to 1650, of any religious duty, as such, or any matter of a religious duty, distinctly considered, having ever been enforced by civil penalties.

But, dear Sir, 1. You cannot be ignorant, that, in that glorious period of reformation, both church and state instigated to, enacted, approved, or pushed the execution of laws requiring papists, and every other adult person in the nation, to partake of the Lord's supper, at least once a-year, under very severe penalties;—and laws annexing *out-lawry* and *confiscation* of property to ecclesiastical excommunications; and that they concurred in annexing severe penalties to the not taking of the national covenant and solemn league, which they accounted *religious covenants with God*;—and that, even the general assembly 1640, as if they had been a civil court, enacted, That expectants who refused to swear the national covenant, should not be allowed to reside in burghs.—These, and any thing similar, not the connecting of duties to man with duties to God in the covenants, as you insinuate, were the things testified against in the clause you quarrel.—If you can prove them, consistent with the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, I dare promise that we shall reprobate the clause. But,

2. All of a sudden, in your account, p. 33,—37. you appear to me a zealous advocate for *toleration of false religion*, and against magistrates restraining their subjects from openly professing, practising, and propagating gross heresies, blasphemies, and idolaties, if they but live peaceably with their neighbours;—

and to hold that magistrates have as much power *against* the truth as *for* the truth. If so, you ought to have openly renounced and condemned the Scotch confession, Art. xxiv. which is expressly sworn to in our national covenant, as the *undoubted truth of God*; the second book of discipline, chap. i. & x.; and the Westminster confession of faith, chap. xx. 4. and xxiii. 3.: part of the larger catechism, Q. 108, 109.; and all the texts of scripture which support it;—and all the vows, by which you and others have solemnly avowed and engaged to maintain and defend the *doctrine* of these passages, as far *sadder affairs*, and more *dreadful disgraces* to our nation, than that part of the act of assembly 1647.; and of the prosecution of principal Wishart, against which you inveigh.

V. Perceiving nothing but *mere quibbles* in your high charge against the beginning of the second paragraph, p. 91. I only reply, (1.) I and my brethren believe that the countenance which God gave the covenanters in Scotland, encouraged multitudes of the English and Irish to enter into the Solemn League, and that their own distressful circumstances instigated others. (2.) We believe that their covenanting was with many all at once, an immediate effect of their reformation, and of the powerful influence of God's Spirit on them. (3.) We are so little for dropping the preservation of the reformation in Scotland, in the Solemn League, that we cannot so much as conceive how a *joint reformation* in all the three kingdoms could have been *promoted* or *advanced*, without maintaining and preserving the reformation of the church of Scotland.

VI. The next *gross fraud* you charge upon us, is that in p. 95. We say, " This introduction of such persons into place of power and trust, was contrary to, and condemned by the word of God," instead of, " The foresaid resolutions of both church and state, were contrary to, and condemned by the word of God." But, Sir, any body of common sense, may see from what preceeds and follows, that this correction was not made, as you pretend, in order to drop all testimony against the public resolutions of the church: But it was made, (1.) To render the connection with the words immediately preceding and following, more natural, close, and evident. (2.) To render the sentence more plain and intelligible to common readers;—it being far more easy for such to perceive, how the *introduction* of notour enemies of a covenanted reformation into places of power and trust, is contrary to the scriptures there mentioned, than to judge whether *resolutions* most craftily expressed, in order to conceal the wickedness thereof, and which few of them have occasion to see, be contrary to such texts or not.—And if once they see the matter which is resolved to be contrary to the word of God, they must necessarily perceive, that *all resolutions*, whether of church or state, in so far as they promote it, must also be contrary to these oracles of God. (3.) The correction makes the sentence an express testimony against the continued admission of such persons into places of power and trust.

VII. The words, *except a few*, in p. 95. in which you find *rank nonsense*; and the paragraph, near the foot of p. 101, which begins, " Prelacy is

“ never considered,” &c. out of which you form a *shocking inconsistency*; and your 15th instance of *gross fraud*, with its *singular oddness*, are no more chargeable upon the Synod, than upon yourself. Neither do I know positively who is to be blamed: Whether the printer has inserted some words and sentences, agreed upon to be erased, as in the two first instances, by the erasements being made with too pale ink; or if the emendations, intended to be made, have not been accurately marked, at the proper place, in the copy he got to print from, as in the last instance, I am not quite certain.—The new clause, brought in after the words *self-love*, in the third line of the paragraph, near the foot of p. 124. should have been inserted after *self-love*, in the eleventh line of that paragraph, instead of these words, ‘ *And error, being in the nature of the thing a false proposition, or expression; and an high expression in common language being nothing else but a truth set in a strong light,*’ which ought not to have been printed at all: and then the whole paragraph would have run as below*.

VIII. You loudly complain, That, in p. 102, we have altogether dropped a passage which intimated

* A like injury has been done to truth, by the Committee’s judging, That the expressions objected against, are only *too high* on the side of self-love; particularly, his asserting “ self-love to be the sole principle, standard, and motive of all religious actions:” and the Assembly’s being of the opinion, That the Committee’s thus stating the matter, is a sufficient caution against error, has thereby reduced his sentiments (concerning self-love’s being the sole principle, standard, and motive of all virtuous and religious actions,) to nothing else, but to *too high expressions on the side of self-love*; which amounts to no more than that he had expressed the truth in equivocal and suspicious terms: hereby the important truths of God, that relate to the principle, standard, and motive of our actions, are left wounded and bleeding in our streets.

the righteousness of God, in rendering Scotland *no more a nation* by itself, and in for ever depriving our noblemen, barons, and burgeses of the opportunity of *acting by themselves*, in a *parliamentary capacity*. Believe me, Sir, we allow, that the sinful neglects of our parliaments at the Revolution, did deserve the judgments of God; but we think, great caution, especially in *public testimonies for the cause of Christ*, ought to be used in referring the public judgments of God to particular causes. Moreover, we are not altogether clear in our own minds, that the *civil effects* of the *union settlement*, which are mentioned in that passage, were a *tremendous judgment of God*, or to call others to hold them *as such*, in their worshipping of Him. Had religion been established agreeably to the *Solemn League*, we cannot say, that it would have been any *real* unhappiness; at least, any *remarkable* unhappiness, for Scotland to be incorporated into one kingdom, or nation, with England.

You complain, that the passage which affirmed, That the oath of allegiance was *imposed in the room of our covenants*, by the Revolution parliament, is also dropped. But, dear Sir, you must allow, That in a public testimony for Christ, every affirmation ought not only to be true, but *fully evident*. Now, we could find no irrefragable evidence, sufficient to warrant our confessing *before God*, as the sin of that parliament, that they intended to impose the oath of allegiance, instead of our covenants. (1.) The original words of the Testimony, which are marked with inverted commas, as if they were the express words of the parliament, are to be found in none of their acts: nor, perhaps, have they the same meaning with those of the parliament, which

are, ‘ And do hereby retreat and rescind all preceding *laws and acts of parliament*, in so far, as they impose any other *oaths of allegiance, supremacy, declarations, or tests*, except the oath *de fideli* ;’—in which words, there is not one syllable of the covenants being laid aside. Neither the national covenant, nor solemn league, are any where in the Scotch laws, called *oaths of allegiance, supremacy, declarations, and tests*, any more than I am called *Mr. Adam Gib of Cross Causey*. If you saw an act of the justiciary lords, condemning me to be hanged for forgery, upon the 18th day of next month, would you debate, from the press, that it was yourself that was thus condemned to the gibbet? You certainly would not. Why then pretend, that, when the parliament placed the oath of allegiance in the *room of all other oaths of allegiance, supremacy, declarations, and tests*, except the oath *de fideli*, they imposed it in the *room of our covenants*, to which no parliament had ever given any such designation. (2.) According to yourself, no law which had ever imposed our covenants, or any parliament which had made any law in their favours, had *any legal force*, when the Revolution parliament imposed the oath of allegiance, nor about thirty years before, but lay *buried* under the *acts rescissory*. How then could *laws, or acts of parliament*, rescinded by the act imposing the oath of allegiance, include any of these acts imposing our covenants, any more than you can kill a man, who was dead and buried thirty years before you was born? (3.) The order of the solemn engagements, *oaths of allegiance, supremacy, &c.* which were laid aside by this act of parliament, plainly manifests, that it was never intended to reach further back than 1661. when the *oath of allegiance*,

or *supremacy*, was imposed; after which came the *declaration*, and the *test*. (4.) Shiels, a zealous covenanter, on Church Communion, p. 76. and Boston in his Sermon on Schism, both of them judicious, and enquiring cotemporaries; and the commission of the general Assembly 1698, in their *Seasonable Admonition*, p. 22. affirm, That they were confident, that the parliament had no intention to impose the oath of allegiance, in the room of our covenants; but only in the place of the *oaths*, which had been imposed in the persecuting period, from 1660 to 1688. (5.) No real friend of our covenants, could wish these *religious covenants* with God debased into the place of a *civil oath* to the king, as the oaths of allegiance or abjuration certainly are.—Why, without any proper evidence to support it, and notwithstanding so much evidence to the contrary, should we dare to require our fellow Christians to worship God, by acknowledging it *as a ground of his righteous judgments*, that the Revolution parliament imposed the civil oath of allegiance, instead of our religious covenants, which I could not, without an abominable debasement of them, be put into its place?

Bring home, Sir, the matter to yourself, and think, if contrary to as much evidence, our Synod should enact it, as a standing ground of mourning before God, that yours had appointed, or encouraged you to write malevolent and columnious pamphlets against their opposers, instead of regularly instructing your family in the truths of God, and visiting or examining your congregation; would you approve our obstinately adhering to such an act, as a true, holy, and prudent zeal for God? You would not. Why then should we use such freedoms with the

Revolution parliament, as you would abhor to have used with yourself and your brethren.

You no less loudly complain, that in p. 102, we insinuate, That the *acts rescissory* seem to be *materially* rescinded, *in so far as contrary to the said true religion, and Presbyterian government, established by act of parliament 1690.* But, Sir, you can scarce be ignorant, that these *acts rescissory* had a double influence, *immediate* and *mediate*. By their immediate influence, they annulled the whole authority of the parliaments, from 1640 to 1650; in consequence of which every one of their acts, relative to the public concerns of the nation, became *null* and *void*, no more pleadable in law, than if they had been the deeds of a drunken club. In respect of this influence, the *acts rescissory* are *left untouched* in the Revolution settlement; and hence all the legal securities given to a covenanted work of reformation, from 1640 to 1650, as well as the authority of those parliaments which gave them, still continue altogether *null* and *void*, in law reckoning, *buried* under the *immediate* influence of the *acts rescissory*.—But by making void these legal securities, these acts rescissory, by their *mediate influence*, also extruded the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Presbyterian church government, from having any civil establishment in this kingdom; and by annulling all the laws which had been made against Prelacy, patronage, holy days, &c. they opened the door for Prelacy and its attendants to return, *as having the only civil establishment*, as much as before 1638. Accordingly, in the first act of parliament, 1662. *restoring episcopacy*, the laws in favours of it are not said to be REVIVED, but merely to be RATIFIED, as acts already in full force. It is only in respect of

this *mediate* and *secondary* influence, that the acts rescissory are, or justly can be, said to be *materially rescinded*, in so far as contrary to the said religion and Presbyterian church government, established by Act V. 1690. —Certainly you will not dare to pretend, at least to prove, that these acts rescissory have still this *secondary* and *mediate* influence, as they had before 1690.

You appear to me to contend, that *no indignity was done* to our solemn covenants, and to the great God, as the party in them, by the wicked laws of Charles II. and James VII. requiring their subjects *solemnly, and under pain of being punished as usurpers of his majesty's authority, to renounce or abjure these covenants as UNLAWFUL and not BINDING*;—or declaring it *high treason to administer, or take them, or even speak, or write in defence of them*. Astonishing! Would the British Parliament do no indignity to Jesus Christ, and his true Protestant religion, if, next month, they should make a law requiring men, under the highest penalties, *solemnly to renounce and abjure it, as an horrid abomination*;—and declaring it *high treason to teach, believe, profess, or speak, or write in defence of it*?

IX. You highly condemn our saying, p. 102. That 'it was the laudible practice in reforming times 'to condemn the *most glaring steps* of defection,' instead of saying, That it was their 'practice to condemn ALL steps of defection.' But really, Sir, we could not find sufficient evidence to warrant a conscientious averring before God, that ALL steps of defection were judicially condemned, between 1638, and 1650. More than forty years ago, Mr. Currie, in his Essay, p. 136, 146, 147. and his Vindication,

p. 252,—313. mentioned several steps of defection, the public condemnation of which, I could never see in any of the acts of Assembly in that period, though I am sure yourself cannot more really wish the candid and manifest vindication of it than I do. But it is in decisive evidence, not in vague and bold affirmations, that I can acquiesce. The acknowledgment prefixed to their covenant, by the Commission in 1648. is indeed remarkably extensive and candid; but yet doth not plainly touch upon ALL STEPS of defection. That in 1651. is still more so. But you cannot pretend, that it was approved by the subsequent Assembly. Far from it.

X. In opposition to our lamenting, p. 103. *That the general Assembly 1690. did not make such a plain and particular acknowledgment of the sins of the preceding persecuting period, as might have been expected,* You contend, That NOT ANY particular acknowledgment AT ALL of the heinous backslidings of the former period, made at the Revolution, can be produced.—But, dear Sir, you have certainly read Act XII. Assembly 1690. for a Fast, in which they acknowledge, That the nation had dealt treacherously with the Lord, and been unstedfast in his covenant;—the interest of the Lord Jesus Christ, and privileges of his church, had been sacrificed to the lusts of men;—the supremacy advanced in such a way, and to such an height as never any Christian church acknowledged;—the government of the church altered, and prelacy, which hath always been grievous to this nation introduced;—and many of the then standing ministry of Scotland, did suddenly and readily comply with it;—many faithful ministers were thereupon cast out, and many insufficient

and scandalous men thrust in on their charges ; and many families ruined, because they would not own them as their pastors ;—imposing and taking ungodly, unlawful oaths and bonds ;—and many ruined and oppressed for not taking them ;—iniquity hath been established by law,—making and executing unrighteous statutes, and sad persecutions of many for their conscience towards God ;—too general fainting ;—ministers not giving seasonable and necessary testimony against the defections and evils of the time ;—the abomination of the mass was set up in many places, and Popish schools erected, and severals fell into idolatry, &c. How is it possible for a man to read this act, and yet pretend, that NOT ANY particular acknowledgment of the backslidings of the former period, AT ALL, was made? Notwithstanding I am not satisfied with it, I insist, that you produce one *as particular* acknowledgment of preceding defections in any one Act of Assembly, between 1637, and 1648.; if you can. I know, you cannot.

XI. You no less blame us for inserting the word SEVERAL into the Committee's account of Mr. Shiels, Boyd's, and Lining's Large paper of Grievances, p. 103. But, dear Sir, we took this word SEVERAL, from the express words of that report as stated in the printed acts of Assembly, which are, ' Though
' there be several good things in it, yet the same
' (*i. e.* Large Paper) doth also contain SEVERAL pe-
' remptory and gross mistakes, unseasonable and
' impracticable proposals, and uncharitable and in-
' jurious reflections, tending rather to kindle con-
' tentions, than to compose divisions.' Besides, Sir, Mr. Lining, in his Preface to Mr. Shiels, on *church communion*, peremptorily affirms, That even the above

words, were not in the original minute of the Assembly, but were foisted into it, by the fraudulent revisers of it for the press; and that the Assembly approved the report of their Committee, *no further*, than as it bore, that their short paper should be read,—and that the reading of their large paper would be inconvenient. Can you prove him a liar?

XII. You complain, that in p. 103. we say, ‘ The Assembly 1690. did not by any *formal* and *express* act, assert the divine right of Presbytery, and the intrinsic power of the church;’ instead of,—‘ did not assert,’ &c. But, Sir, had your own Synod been in their circumstances, and like them had avowed Presbyterian government to be *acceptable to God*, Act III.; had approved Messrs. Shiels, Lining, and Boyd’s short Paper, in which is affirmed, That the general Assembly is invested with authority, *in foro divino*, Act V.—and had required all intrants to the ministry, or to preach the gospel, solemnly to approve the Westminster Confession of Faith, several passages of which, as chap. xxxi. 1, 2. and xxiii. conjunctly taken, can never be reconciled to Erastianism, Episcopacy, or Independency,—you could certainly have made a shift to prove, that they had *indirectly* asserted these important points. Moreover, if, as you pretend, the Assembly 1690. did not AT ALL assert these truths, the expression of the Re-exhibition, will still stand firm and sure, containing nothing but exact truth.

XIII. You next contend, That the solemn declaration of the Moderator, in name of the Assembly 1692. when King William, by his Commissioner, dissolved

it, without naming any diet for another meeting, viz. ‘ That the office-bearers in the house of God, ‘ have a spiritual intrinsic power from Jesus Christ, ‘ the only Head of the church, to meet in Assembly ‘ about the affairs thereof, the necessity of the same ‘ having been first represented to the magistrate,’ —and his naming a diet for their next meeting,—and the members unanimous assent to his declaration, and his nomination of another diet;—all which is said to be marked in the minutes of the Assembly, —was no standing testimony against King William’s Erastian adjournment, or dissolution of general Assemblies. But, dear Sir, (1.) If this declaration had been your own, would you have thought as lightly of it? (2.) The eminently zealous Mr. Hog of Carnock, who was present, doth in his *Life in Miscellany*, p. *mibi* 198. represent it as a most FREE and FAITHFUL TESTIMONY against such Erastian encroachment on the Headship of Christ, and intrinsic power of the church, which *greatly gladdened* the hearts of the godly in that period. (3.) Suppose you should not allow it to be any standing testimony *at all*; our assertion in the Re-exhibition, will still hold true, viz. That there is *no such standing testimony as could be wished*, against these Erastian encroachments.

XIV. Because, for mere want of evidence to support us, we forbear to affirm, p. 108. That the abjuration oath is imposed by the Parliament of Britain, *in the place of our covenants*,—you pretend, that we refuse any injury to be done to our covenants by it. But, (1.) Nothing can be more really false. We look upon the abjuration oath, as *unnecessary* and *vain*; —as containing *several dubious, unintelligible, or unsafe*

expressions;—as *binding* the swearers to an *indirect maintainance of Prelacy*, and the *ceremonies* in England;—and as calculated to *give offence, on every hand*. We look on the imposition of it, or of the oath of allegiance *on ministers*, as a *necessary qualification* of their holding or exercising their office, or enjoying their benefice, to be highly Erastian. (2.) Nothing can be more evidently false. In the very words printed by your order, we assert, That *the united constitution, directly opposite to our covenant-union, is homologated and sworn to, in the abjuration oath*. In the preceding page 107. we expressly affirm, That it was at first *framed and calculated for the maintainance of the English constitution, both in church and state*.—But after all, (3.) It is no more contrary to our covenants than to our solemn engagements in baptism and the Lord's supper, in the room of which, you do not pretend it to be imposed. Nor can you produce a single expression in the acts imposing it, which represent it as required in the room of our covenants, any more than in the room of our baptism. It is plainly imposed as a *civil oath*, while our covenants are certainly *religious vows*.

XV. Your next charge of gross fraud, is intirely founded upon the misprinting of the passage, as is hinted above, N^o VII. p. 21, 22.

XVI. You next complain, that in p. 140. we say, ‘ No proper nor effectual remedies are applied against this growing evil (Popery) by either church or state;’ instead of saying, ‘ No proper nor effectual remedies are applied against this growing evil; and particularly, church discipline is not duly ex-

‘ exercised against Papists, according to former laudible
 ‘ acts and constitutions of the church.’ But, Sir,
 (1.) Our correction renders the Testimony *more extensive*, striking expressly against the neglect of the
 state, as well as of the church, to apply effectual remedies against the growth of Popery. (2.) It makes
 it *no less safe*: for, notwithstanding our hearty abhorrence of Popery, we could not, in a solemn testimony for Jesus Christ, cordially approve every thing
 enacted against Papists in all the constitutions of either church or state. Dare you say, you candidly
 do it? No; you dare not.

XVII, XVIII. Your two last instances of the gross and fraudulent abuses, which we have committed upon the Testimony, are that, in p. 152. we declare our adherence, ‘ to the several *regular and scriptural*
 ‘ Testimonies in behalf of the covenanted reformation of this church, from the year 1650, to the
 ‘ year 1688;’ instead of,—‘ to the several testimonies,’ &c.—And, that we declare our adherence to the several Testimonies emitted since the year 1688, against the several steps of backsliding from a covenanted reformation once attained unto, *In so far as
 lenarly as these Testimonies are calculated to maintain the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland, founded on the word of God.* But, dear Sir, (1.) We have but copied the example which the Associate Presbytery set us, in the end of the preceding paragraph: and so are confident that our additions express nothing, but what they really meant. (2.) We cannot be too cautious in our solemn adherences to human testimonies, especially to so many as were emitted in so long a time. I do not know,

if even yourself ever saw them all. Such testimonies may be very well designed, and be very right in the main, and nevertheless contain some things, to which, in matter or manner, we could not lawfully adhere. —Would to God, that cautiousness in representing other mens sins, especially in our worshipping of God, while we had been severe towards our own; —and cautiousness in adhering to human testimonies, while we had readily received the inspired testimony of Christ, and earnestly reduced it to practice,—had been the worst blemish in Seceding Ministers and people; and that, instead of so many dry disputes, and cavilling at, and perverting one another's words, our principal strife had been, who should PRAY BEST, PREACH BEST, and LIVE BEST; and that you, who must in a very little, give a *very extensive* account of your conduct, before the judgment-seat of Christ, would, by his grace, begin to leave a proper example of that charity, that candor, that humility, that meekness, which becometh an aged minister, and professed witness of Jesus Christ!

F I N I S.



